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Monday, 11 July 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/59/861)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/59/861. It contains a letter dated 1 July 2005 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that 10 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/59/861?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 53 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Draft resolution (A/59/L.64)

The President (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that the General Assembly held a joint debate on agenda items 11 and 53 at its 24th through 29th plenary meetings, from 11 to 13 October 2004. In connection with agenda item 53, the Assembly now has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/59/L.64.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.64.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.64 on behalf of the following sponsors: Afghanistan, Belgium, Bhutan, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Fiji, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, the Maldives, Nauru, Palau, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Ukraine and Brazil, as well as the sponsors that have joined the initiative since Thursday, 7 July, namely, Lithuania and the Marshall Islands.

At the outset, I express our sincere thanks to you, Mr. President, for convening this timely debate, and I commend your outstanding leadership in conducting the work of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth

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session, in particular the preparatory process for the September summit.

As we approach the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, the membership as a whole shares a sense of urgency in promoting the Organization's effectiveness in all areas, particularly in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security. Awareness of the need for change is especially pronounced among all of us.

The sponsors are keenly aware that the consideration of this draft proposal by 191 Members of the United Nations constitutes an historic step in multilateral diplomacy. Its provisions would significantly strengthen this world Organization and truly reform the Security Council, the main organ entrusted by the Charter with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Accumulated experience acquired since the founding of the United Nations demonstrates that in the eyes of our peoples, the realities of power in 1945 were superseded long ago. The security structure established then is now glaringly outdated. The Security Council, in order to effectively carry out its functions and exercise its powers, needs to undergo thorough reform that includes expanding the category of permanent members in order to bring it in line with the contemporary world. Such reform would ensure a better response to the evolving nature and characteristics of threats to peace, as well as more systematic and effective compliance with the Council's decisions. Representativeness and equitable participation must be clearly reflected in the composition of the Security Council. Only through the updated observance of those principles will the legitimacy of the Council's decisions be ensured.

Draft resolution A/59/L.64 aims to expand the membership of the Security Council to reflect new realities. As expressed in the draft, that would shape a balance of forces capable of enhancing the Council's responsiveness to the views and needs of all Member States, in particular developing countries, and of ensuring the adoption of improved working methods.

The draft resolution would objectively establish the mechanisms required to achieve such an outcome, which include making full use of the democratic and universal decision-making processes of the General Assembly. It would also determine future consideration of the question of the veto, and it foresees a review of the Council's effectiveness and composition 15 years after the entry into force of the changes proposed.

As is widely known, our draft builds upon a proposal put forward by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and reiterated by the Secretary-General in his report "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005). It allows for enhanced participation of all regional groups in the Council's composition.

The group of sponsors comprises countries rich and poor, large and small, islands and landlocked States, as well as a permanent member of the Security Council. In preparing the draft, the sponsors engaged in open, transparent and extensive dialogue with all Member States of the United Nations, both in New York and in capitals. The result reflects the broadest possible scope of views on the matter — indeed, the views of those who strive for genuine, meaningful reform of the Security Council and, in that spirit, constructively participated in the process.

Our draft is being presented to the General Assembly in time for decisions to be taken before September. Its submission after the conclusion of two major summit meetings allowed countries in both Africa and the Caribbean to carefully ponder the pros and cons of the proposed expansion. We have been greatly encouraged by the fact that the African heads of State, speaking with one voice at Sirte, have taken a stand so similar to ours, and by the meeting of the heads of Government of the Caribbean Community in Saint Lucia, at which a significant number of those States indicated that they are inclined to support the proposal.

The purpose of establishing a more balanced composition of the Security Council can be realized only through democratic expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent member categories. That can be achieved through the selection of new permanent members by the General Assembly in order to redress the current situation and to ensure permanent representation for developed and developing countries alike. Moreover, the addition of new permanent members selected by the Assembly would establish a direct link of accountability between the new permanent members and the general membership. The envisaged review mechanism constitutes an additional guarantee to that effect. Promoting substantive and meaningful structural changes in the Security Council

will also result in a revision of its practices and working methods.

Taking a decision on this draft will mean setting in motion a process that will, no doubt, give tremendous impetus to multilateralism and to the democratization of international relations and bring about a more balanced and more efficient Council. It is a process that, once started, will be owned by the entire United Nations membership.

As the United Nations prepares for the convening of the September summit, it has become increasingly evident that security and development are interconnected in a manner that does not allow for progress in one area without consistent advances in the other. A more comprehensive, updated definition of the present-day threats confronting mankind is essential to ensure that the social, economic and human rights concerns of the peoples of the United Nations are duly taken into account as the United Nations advances towards more efficiently ensuring peace and security.

The ghastly threat of terrorist attacks — which, once more, have revealed in a shocking manner the indiscriminate brutality and cruelty of that scourge — is another, sadly recurrent, reminder of the need to update our threat perceptions and appropriately adapt appropriate structures to deal with them. It is clear that the Council's future effectiveness is also contingent upon the permanent presence of major financial contributors and those who are most willing and able to contribute to the work of the United Nations.

Criticism of our proposal so far has failed to realistically address the core issue of permanent membership. Restricting the expansion of the Council to the category of non-permanent members would not only mean maintaining the status quo, but also risk increasing the disparity in its composition. It would do nothing to correct its structural imbalances. Some have also stated that a proposal such as ours should be subject to a unanimous decision — a claim the true objective of which is plain for all to see: it is designed simply to block the process.

Our response is to let the General Assembly make use of its universal and democratic decision-making process, the same method by which parliaments daily go about their business. As for the argument that working to bring this issue to a conclusion after 12 years of discussion is somehow still premature, we can only consider it an attempt to beguile.

I must emphasize the shared perception among the sponsors and beyond that the successful conclusion of the effort to reform the Security Council would enhance that body's legitimacy and representativeness and constitute a very important boost for the strengthening of the Organization, as well as ensure the successful outcome of the September summit meeting. We are convinced that, both in substance and in procedure, our proposal effectively and unambiguously promotes, in a direct and concrete manner, the democratization of international relations under the auspices of the United Nations and facilitates the achievement of peace and security in full harmony with the observance of the purposes and principles of the Charter. That goal is now within reach. An opportunity such as this must not be missed.

In conclusion, it is important to recall the remark made by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, that no United Nations reform effort would be complete without the reform of the Security Council, and his recommendation that we deal with the issue before September. Perhaps more than anyone else, he has been aware of the dire need to preserve and strengthen the United Nations as the only multilateral universal instrument for addressing and resolving the multifaceted and increasingly complex crises that affect humanity. Once more, we would do well to heed his advice.

I wish to make clear in this regard that we do not seek to impose a vote on this matter before it has been comprehensively discussed by Member States in this debate. As has been the case since the establishment of the group of four 10 months ago, and particularly now, with the participation of all of the sponsors, we stand ready to advance the dialogue with all those groups that genuinely wish to promote the strengthening of the Organization and of its capacity to deal with contemporary threats to peace and security. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Germany, India, Japan and my own country stated in London last Friday, 8 July,

> "Against the backdrop of the decisions of the recent Summit of the African Union in Sirte and the CARICOM Summit in Saint Lucia, the ministers reiterated their readiness to continue dialogue with the African Union and CARICOM,

as well as the co-sponsors of the draft resolution and the United Nations membership at large."

Putting this decision into practice, they met on that occasion with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, in his capacity as member of the core group of the follow-up mechanism on the reform of the United Nations established by the African Union to review developments at the African Union Summit and to discuss prospects for common action in the immediate future with regard to the expansion and reform of the Security Council.

In presenting the present proposal, the sponsors have taken a bold step that paves the way for real, meaningful change in the Organization. Let us all follow through in our determination to bring about a better world.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important meeting and to express my delegation's gratitude for your efforts to advance the United Nations reform agenda. In this context, I should also like to reiterate Jordan's support for all efforts aimed at achieving the hoped-for reforms and to express our utmost appreciation for all the valuable ideas presented in that regard.

United Nations reform will not be complete unless we reform the Security Council by enhancing its working methods and expanding the membership. In general, therefore, Jordan supports draft resolution A/59/L.64, which is before us today. We are utterly convinced that the draft resolution is a step in the right direction to sustainable and effective reform. Furthermore, in supporting the framework set out in the draft resolution, Jordan is upholding its prior commitments regarding Security Council expansion and reform. Nevertheless, we believe that there is still room to improve the language on enhancing the working methods of the Council by using more of the ideas put forward in the debate over the past few months.

We agree with the view that the membership of the Council should be expanded in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. The draft resolution provides a democratic basis for expanding the membership in which, we believe, the Group of Arab States should be represented at all times.

Today, we have an historic opportunity to make a change for the better. Let us take advantage of the existing momentum and capitalize on this opportunity to do what is in the best interests of our Organization.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): I would like first of all to express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for having convened this historic plenary meeting, which not only presages the success of the September summit, but also marks an important juncture with respect to the future of the United Nations. We are confident that Member States will be able to make the necessary decisions under your strong and wise leadership; you can count on my delegation's fully cooperation.

At the same time, as a sponsor of the draft framework resolution, Japan would like to fully endorse the introductory statement just made by the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Ambassador Sardenberg, on behalf of the sponsors.

As the international community rises to meet the challenges we face in today's world, the United Nations must not be left on the sidelines. We must reform the United Nations into an Organization capable of addressing the realities of the twenty-first century. In other words, we must create a new United Nations for the new era, as Prime Minister Koizumi stated last year from this podium.

Among those changes, the core must be the reform of the Security Council. As the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council must fulfil its role with the maximum cooperation and participation of the international community. For that purpose, the Council must improve its representation to better reflect today's world.

In addition, the Security Council must be provided with adequate resources to address challenges effectively. Countries with the will and resources to play a major role in international peace and security must always take part in the Council's decision-making process. The Security Council therefore needs to be expanded in both its permanent and non-permanent categories, adding new members from developing and developed countries alike.

As a result of extensive consultations with Member States, Japan, together with Brazil, Germany and India, and with the support of sponsors, submitted a draft framework resolution to the General Assembly

last week. We have listened carefully to the opinions of the Member States, both in New York and in capitals around the world, and we have also waited for the results of the African Union and Caribbean Community (CARICOM) summit meetings. Africa is a vital member of the international community and, thus, its participation is crucial for realizing Security Council reform.

In that regard, Japan welcomes Africa's resolve to pursue the enlargement of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, as declared in the recent African Union summit in Sirte. At the same time, we welcome the CARICOM summit communiqué, which indicated the inclination of a significant number of CARICOM member States to support the draft resolution.

We believe that this draft resolution is the only viable proposal capable of garnering the support of more than two thirds of the Member States. Japan appreciates the fact that many Member States have already expressed their support for the draft resolution and is determined to make further efforts towards its adoption with maximum support. Japan, together with other sponsors, has been conducting constructive dialogue with the Member States aimed at achieving the common goal of reforming the Security Council.

In view of the decisions adopted at the African Union and CARICOM summit meetings, we are ready to continue our dialogue with the African Union and CARICOM, as well as the United Nations membership at large. Japan will continue to work in a transparent and democratic manner in seeking the adoption of the draft resolution, and we strongly expect that all Member States will take part in realizing the reform of the Security Council.

With respect to the timing of the decision on the issue of Security Council reform, the Secretary-General has clearly stated in his report that "Member States should agree to take a decision on this important issue before the summit in September 2005" (*A/59/2005, para. 170*). The timing of any important decision must be carefully considered. We are not arguing for any undue haste. However, it is important to remember the following.

First, discussions on reform of the Security Council have been going on in earnest for well over a decade, since the early 1990s. Secondly, world leaders at the Millennium Summit in 2000 resolved "to intensify ... efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects" (*resolution 55/2, para. 30*), thus declaring their political intention to achieve results. Thirdly, the subsequent submission of the High-level Panel's report and the Secretary-General's report, as well as the circulation of the group of four countries' draft framework resolution in May, prompted further extensive discussion among the Member States in regional groups here in New York and in capitals around the world.

Permanent membership is not a privilege; rather, it is a duty and responsibility for nations that are willing and able to contribute effectively to international peace and security. As a peace-loving nation that is fully committed to the ideals and objectives of the Organization, Japan firmly believes that it has a significant role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as the advancement of the agenda of security and development, by becoming a new permanent member of the Security Council. On that basis, we are ready to submit our aspirations to the general membership for its consideration.

The reform agenda of the United Nations is much broader than just Security Council reform. Japan attaches great importance to such issues as development, the establishment of the peacebuilding commission and the human rights council, and reform of the Secretariat and management system. We have already expressed our willingness to achieve tangible results in those areas of United Nations reform and are working closely with likeminded delegations towards that end.

At the same time, it is vital that we seize the momentum for reform. We firmly believe that a bold decision on the Security Council reform issue will not delay the reform process, but will create the further momentum needed to tackle other important reform issues during the September summit. As we have all witnessed at the current session of the General Assembly, an overwhelming majority shares a sense of urgency for reforming the Security Council. It is clear that the time for a decision on Security Council reform has arrived.

It is our sincere hope that future generations will judge favourably the crucial decision we will make to create a new United Nations for the new era. Japan will

spare no effort in working with other Member States to achieve that end.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Three weeks ago, addressing this Assembly, my delegation called for a broad debate on Security Council reform that would definitively clarify everyone's position, enable a fully transparent discussion of the various proposals before us, and identify the outlines of the desired Council reform and restore it to its true context — the overall reform of the United Nations.

For months, our debates on reform have literally been held hostage by the question of Security Council enlargement, which has overshadowed not only the broader issue of the necessary reform of that body, but also other aspects of United Nations reform, imperilling the Organization's entire restructuring process and seriously dividing the international community. Moreover, although Security Council reform is supposed primarily to address concerns about democratizing that body and making it more representative and legitimate through broader and more equitable participation in its work by all the world's regions, that reform is, unfortunately, perceived by some as merely being a way of fulfilling their ambition to serve on the Security Council on a permanent basis.

In that regard, African heads of State or Government clearly identified the framework for and the outlines of the reform of the Organization at the summit held at Sirte on 4 and 5 July 2005. In the solemn declaration they adopted they stressed that reform should be all-inclusive and should encompass all components of the United Nations system, including the General Assembly and the Security Council. In the same declaration they also emphasized the need to strengthen the leadership of the General Assembly to enable it to fully play its role as the most representative and democratic organ of the United Nations system. Lastly, the heads of State and Government reiterated their determination to ensure the success of the Ezulwini Consensus, which, I would recall, spells out Africa's position on development, collective security, conflict prevention and the conditions for the use of force, as well as the institutional reform of the United Nations.

More specifically, with regard to the reform of the Security Council and in the light of the proposals and positions that are on the negotiating table today — which have all been deemed as unsatisfactory vis-à-vis Africa's legitimate aspirations as expressed in the Ezulwini Consensus and which, moreover, could well serve to divide the continent — African leaders, who are committed to the principle of equitable geographic distribution and convinced of the advantages of rotation, authorized the submission directly to the General Assembly their own vision of an expanded Security Council that is more representative, legitimate and in keeping with new international realities. That vision was expressed in a draft resolution that was unanimously adopted by the Assembly of the African Union, which is its highest body. That draft resolution is now to be placed before the General Assembly for consideration. A ministerial follow-up mechanism comprising 15 countries was also called for by the African Union Assembly to promote Africa's position at the United Nations in a collective and united manner, as well as to ensure its aspirations as set out in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte declaration.

That African vision entails the establishment of a 26-member Security Council in which our continent will have two permanent seats having the same prerogatives and privileges as the current permanent members, including the right of veto, as well as five non-permanent seats. Asia would have two additional permanent seats and one additional non-permanent seat. Latin America and the Caribbean would have one permanent seat and one additional non-permanent seat. The Group of Western European and other States would have one additional permanent seat, with the Group of Eastern European States having one additional non-permanent seat. At the appropriate time and in a spirit of unity and solidarity, the African Union will decide upon how to allocate its seats in keeping with the Sirte declaration. Such an expanded Council would more faithfully reflect the realities of today's world, allow the Council to be more attentive to the aspirations of all Member States and remedy a historic injustice against Africa, which as of today is the only continent without a permanent seat in the Security Council.

Allow me now to clarify Africa's position with regard to the thorny issue of the veto.

Like other countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, African States have always considered the veto as an anachronistic, unfair and completely unjustified right, and have therefore demanded its outright abolition. That position was enshrined in a 1976 declaration adopted at the Mauritius summit of

the Organization of African Unity. That position has not changed, and Africa clearly reiterated its principled opposition to the right of the veto at Ezulwini.

At the same time, Africa believes that, so long as the current permanent members possess the right of the veto, it would be unfair, unreasonable and unacceptable for new permanent members to be deprived of that right. Indeed, permanent members without the right of the veto would have no way of influencing events and would not be able to alter the so-called power relationships or be able to act as effectively as they would like within the Security Council, which would continue to be completely dominated by the five current permanent members. What makes permanent membership unique is not so much the permanency of the seat as the powers that go along with it. Moreover, the current imbalance favouring a continent from which no fewer than three permanent members have the veto would simply become worse; whereas the place and role of non-permanent members would be further diminished. Lastly, what credibility would such a Council have, and what principles of equality and democracy could it invoke, if the Security Council were to be a three-tiered body with, as it were, three groupings: permanent members with the veto, permanent members without the veto and non-permanent members?

It is for that reason — and on this position we will not compromise — that we believe that the right of the veto is a key and intrinsic factor of permanent membership. Nor will we compromise on our demand for two additional non-permanent seats; we believe that it would only be fair for Africa to have a total of five non-permanent seats on the Security Council.

Our draft resolution is a fair and equitable text that meets the aspirations and concerns of the majority of Member States. It calls for the establishment of a Security Council that is more representative and legitimate by enabling all regions and continents to participate in managing world affairs, thereby ensuring their support and mobilization in favour of peace, justice and progress. It goes without saying that, as Africans, we cannot logically support any draft resolution other than our own. I would like to point out here that the position adopted by African heads of State at Sirte is the same position they agreed upon at Harare in 1997. Inevitably, it differs from proposals put forward subsequently by other groups. It is of course our wish that our draft resolution have the broadest possible support and that it serve as a catalyst for the reform process as a whole.

In the course of the coming days and weeks, we will work within the follow-up mechanism to explain and promote our vision of a renewed, expanded and more democratic Council, bearing in mind that Security Council reform is only one part of a broader process, namely, the adoption of comprehensive and complete reform of the United Nations and, above and beyond that, of international relations as a whole. Clearly, it would be ideal for Africa once again to recover its place and rank on this sixtieth anniversary of our Organization. But, if necessary, Africa will be patient and will ensure that, in any event, the reform of the Security Council will not obscure or jeopardize the overall reform of the United Nations, which it does desire.

In that connection, I would like to pay high tribute to you, Mr. President, for your constant efforts to ensure that our meeting in September will be a new starting point for our Organization.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): On behalf of the Pakistan delegation, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting of the General Assembly.

When the Charter of the United Nations was adopted in San Francisco, President Harry Truman of the United States said to the assembled delegates,

> "You have created a great instrument for peace and security and human progress in the world.
>
> "The world must now use it.
>
> "If we fail to use it, we shall betray all those who have died in order that we might meet here in freedom and safety to create it.
>
> "If we seek to use it selfishly — for the advantage of any one nation or any small group of nations — we shall be equally guilty of that betrayal." (*Documents of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, San Francisco, 1945, vol. 1, p. 682*)

When, after a divisive war, Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed a panel on United Nations reform, his purpose was to strengthen and unite the United Nations to address old and new threats. Unfortunately, almost from the outset, that important endeavour was hijacked by a small group of nations

seeking new and unequal privileges for themselves in an enlarged Security Council. After the establishment of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, pressure of all kinds was exerted on its members and its secretariat, other officials and Member States to secure reflection of a model for Council expansion that could selfishly secure permanent membership for that small group of nations.

During recent months, the endeavour by the so-called group of four to secure support for and endorsement of their position has taken forms that if practised in national elections would be judged to be unethical, if not worse. An outcome for Council reform achieved by such questionable means is unlikely to be sustainable or to strengthen the United Nations. We should adopt guidelines in the United Nations reform process to prevent the use of such means to twist the democratic will of free peoples and nations.

To add insult to injury, self-interest has been portrayed as altruism. The seekers of special privileges and power masquerade as the champions of the weak and the disadvantaged, asserting that the special privileges they seek will make the Council more representative and will neutralize the power of the present permanent members. History has witnessed many who have proclaimed that they came to bury Caesar, not to praise him.

On behalf of Pakistan — and I am sure I speak for all members of the Uniting for Consensus movement — let me express our regret that the group of four has formally tabled its draft resolution. That move — and the reported intention to put it to a vote — is contrary to our decisions and agreements regarding the process of our preparations for the September summit. In General Assembly resolution 59/291, we decided to achieve "the broadest possible agreement on all major issues", surely including Security Council reform. In a letter dated 16 May, the group of four, circulating its text informally, expressed the desire for "a constructive dialogue, with a view to reaching the broadest possible agreement". As a result of the positive response of the Uniting for Consensus group, it was agreed with you, Mr. President, to engage together in a constructive dialogue on the issue of Security Council reform.

The tabling of the group of four's draft resolution has several serious implications of which we should all be aware. First, Council reform, willy-nilly, will overshadow and even eclipse other aspects of United Nations reform. Second, the rules by which we have been preparing for the September summit — the painstaking effort to build consensus that the President has been leading — will now change; resolutions on various issues could now be submitted and voted upon including on other divisive issues such as human rights, management reform, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Third, a divisive vote on this issue would politicize and perhaps derail the entire preparatory process for September.

The views of Pakistan and other Uniting for Consensus members on draft resolution A/59/L.64 are no secret. We strongly oppose it for several reasons.

First, the proposed resolution is contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Most of us, when we entered the United Nations, were given no choice regarding the existing five permanent members. But today we do have a choice, and we will not choose to anoint six States with special privileges and stand ourselves as second-class Members of the Organization. Let us remember that we all entered the United Nations as sovereign and equal States. We cannot compromise the very basis of our membership in the Organization.

Second, the draft resolution is unequal. It would give permanent membership to 11 States, consigning 180 other States to competition for 14 seats.

Third, it would erode, not enhance, democracy and accountability in the Security Council. The ratio of permanent — that is, unelected — to non-permanent or elected members would increase from 1:2 to almost 1:1. Half of the Council's membership would be unaccountable. Indeed, the word "accountability" does not appear in the group of four's draft resolution.

Fourth, it would enlarge the club of the privileged, which would have a vested interest in addressing most issues in the Security Council, further depriving the General Assembly of oxygen and enhancing the domination of the Security Council.

Fifth, that draft resolution would reduce, not improve, the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Security Council by requiring the constant reconciliation of the interests of 11, instead of five permanent members.

Sixth, this zero-sum proposal, with 6 winners and 180 losers, would increase divisions and tensions not only within the United Nations but within various regions, contradicting the objective of promoting peace and security.

Seventh, the group of four's complex, three-phase approach will in any case lead to a dead end. It could fail to receive a two-thirds majority at any one of the three stages, and, given the opposition to the proposal from a significant number of significant States, as well as the opposition or reservations of some of the five permanent members, it is highly unlikely that a Charter amendment based on the approach of the group of four would ever come into effect. If we follow the group into that cul-de-sac we will squander the present opportunity to realize an equitable and acceptable reform of the Security Council.

Instead of walking into the dead end of the group of four, I would like to offer instead the draft resolution circulated by the members of the group Uniting for Consensus as an approach that can accommodate the legitimate interests and concerns of all Member States, regions and subregions. Let me outline the virtues of our proposal, which is being circulated again today with my statement.

First, our proposal is equitable and fair. In proposing an increase in Council membership from 15 to 25 it does not discriminate between Member States. All will be eligible for election or re-election in accordance with the principle of sovereign equality.

Secondly, it will increase the Council's representativeness. The ratio of unelected to elected members will change from 1:2 to 1:4, instead of 1:1 under the draft resolution of the group of four. Simple arithmetic indicates that under the proposal of the Uniting for Consensus group the chances of all States, including the smaller ones, to serve on the Council will be doubled.

Thirdly, the Uniting for Consensus draft resolution will enhance accountability through the mechanism of periodic election and/or re-election. States that are elected to represent regions or groups will remain answerable to those regions or groups. If elected permanently, they will not. The draft resolution will, as a by-product, also reinforce the authority of the General Assembly — that is, of the general membership — in relation to the Security Council.

Fourthly, the Uniting for Consensus proposal is simple. It proposes direct approval of Charter amendments. It will not need to go through a complex and uncharted three-stage process. This proposal could come into effect much sooner.

Fifthly, our proposal is realistic. It can accommodate the interests and positions of all Member States, including the five permanent members, and thus is more likely to secure eventual ratification than the proposal of the group of four.

Perhaps the single greatest virtue of the Uniting for Consensus proposal is its inherent flexibility. This proposal can, through variable geometry, better accommodate the aspirations and interests of the majority of the membership as well as of regional groups such as the African group.

We understand fully the desire of Africa for greater representation as well as for equal rights with other regions. We note from the African Union's draft resolution and the accompanying documents adopted at Sirte that the AU wishes to select its own representatives, who would represent the AU and act on its behalf. If the African Union wishes to designate two countries for continuous — that is, permanent — membership on the Security Council, it could do so under the Uniting for Consensus proposal. The only difference would be that under our proposal the AU would retain the power to ensure accountability on the part of the nominated State or States through periodic election and/or re-election.

In case the African Union wants more than two countries to occupy its two permanent seats — that is, to opt for some form of periodic rotation — that would also be possible under the Uniting for Consensus proposal. Such periodic rotation could ensure, furthermore, equitable and balanced representation of all the five subregions of Africa. However, if the AU believes that the allocation of an additional seat is essential to ensure equitable representation of all its subregions, my delegation, at least — and I am sure other members of Uniting for Consensus — would be prepared to discuss this with the members of the AU.

We fully understand Africa's desire to have the same rights as those enjoyed by other regions. The African Union's desire for full rights, however, appears to be qualitatively different from the right of veto as currently held by five permanent members. As we understand it, the AU is seeking this right on behalf of

the entire African region, not as a right that is to be retained by one or two countries for themselves. The Pakistan delegation believes that ways and means can be evolved under the Uniting for Consensus proposal to provide Africa with the collective ability to uphold its interests within a reformed Security Council.

The Uniting for Consensus group welcomes the fact that the African Union at its summit decided to seek negotiations and reciprocal support from other groups. The Consensus group looks forward to continuing the dialogue with the AU that we had initiated prior to the Sirte summit with a view to restoring the prospects of accommodating each other's positions and interests in a final decision regarding Security Council reform.

Similarly, the Consensus group believes that our approach can accommodate the aspirations of other inter-regional, regional and subregional groups such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Arab League, CARICOM and the Pacific Island countries. All of them have legitimate political and regional interests to promote and defend within the Security Council. The OIC, whose 57 members constitute more than one fourth of the United Nations membership, has asked for adequate representation on the Council in proportion to its membership. The Arab League also wants adequate and continuous presence on the Council. Under the Consensus approach, the Arab countries could be assured of one seat each from Africa and Asia. The OIC could also obtain one or more additional, elected seats from the non-Arab subregions of Africa and Asia.

Under the Uniting for Consensus proposal the CARICOM and Central American States could also hope for adequate representation for their respective subregions. Similarly, the Pacific Island Forum States could seek adequate representation within Asia. It must be noted that the representation of smaller States would be significantly enhanced under the Consensus proposal, rather than the group of four proposal. They could compete for 20 elected seats under the Consensus proposal, rather than 14 under the group of four proposal.

Finally, the Consensus approach could even accommodate, at least partially, the aspirations and interests of the group of four and other aspirants for permanent memberships. As in the case of Africa, other regions could also evolve agreements for more frequent, longer-term or even continuous representation of certain countries within their respective regions. Such specific arrangements to accommodate the interests of all concerned can be reflected either in the text of the resolution or in separate annexes or protocols to be approved by the General Assembly.

If we are to achieve a result that can accommodate the interests of all major groups within the United Nations, what is required now is not a divisive and precipitate vote but a wise decision to initiate a process to achieve such an outcome. At stake is the success or failure of the September summit. At stake is whether we can achieve important decisions on development and genuine United Nations reform, or squander our political energies on a selfish and ultimately fruitless demand of a few ambitious States for unequal privileges.

What is at stake is the credibility and perhaps the survival of the United Nations. What is at stake is peace and tranquillity in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. We urge the Assembly to step back from the brink. Instead of divisive vote let us opt for a decisive dialogue. It is only through dialogue and consensus that, together, we can build a new era of friendly relations among equal and sovereign nations at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks you, Sir, for having organized the debate on Security Council reform that has begun today. For at least two reasons, I believe that the debate has been launched at the right time.

First, our Organization has been considering the question of Council expansion for several years now. Every stone has been turned, in particular since the intensive consultations sparked last summer by the High-level Panel's report. As the Secretary-General has said, everyone knows that the time has come to conclude the exercise.

That is all the more true as we approach the final phase of preparing for the September summit. Thanks to the intense collective work done by the Assembly under your guidance, Sir, our heads of State and Government should be in a position by September to adopt measures in every field — development, security, human rights, and the structure and management of our Organization — that we hope will deeply renew the entire United Nations.

It goes without saying that Security Council reform is an important element of overall United Nations reform. We are all aware of the Security Council's primary role with respect to peace and security. That role is growing. Indeed, in considering and studying the list of crises on the Council's agenda, we see it playing that role essentially on behalf of the most fragile and vulnerable regions, countries or populations. It is therefore essential that we enhance the Council's effectiveness by ensuring that its membership better reflects the realities of today's world.

From the outset, France has maintained that, in order to achieve that aim, the Security Council must be enlarged in both categories of membership: permanent and non-permanent. Permanent membership must be extended to other Powers that can make a major contribution to international peace and security. With respect to the non-permanent membership, we also need to establish proper geographical representation, in accordance with the Charter. Finally, Africa must enjoy equitable representation, including in the permanent membership. Happily, through its regional organizations, Africa has been able to establish a fruitful partnership with the Security Council in the management of its crises.

Four countries — Brazil, Germany, India and Japan — whose individual aspirations we support, have submitted a draft resolution. The draft fully meets the various requirements to which I have referred. Moreover, as we all know, it is the result of lengthy and in-depth consultations. I would add another, clearly essential point. With respect to sensitive issues, including the right of the veto, the draft resolution includes unambiguous and therefore appropriate provisions. It was on that basis that France became a co-sponsor.

It is my hope that the draft resolution will enjoy very broad support when its principal sponsors bring it to the vote.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): I join my colleagues in thanking you sincerely, Sir, for holding this meeting on the important matter at hand.

The delicate question of reform of the Security Council has long occupied the work of all of us here at the United Nations. Indeed, my predecessor served for three years as co-Vice-Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. The efforts at that time, unfortunately, did not prove to be sufficient.

The Open-ended Working Group has been in existence for eleven and a half years and, through detailed and time-consuming discussions that have taken place there and elsewhere, everyone knows the basic views of most other Member States on those matters. The majority of the United Nations Member States realized some time ago that, although a 100-per-cent consensus on those matters would be desirable, it simply is not reachable. The goal, therefore, is to come as close to a consensus as possible through extensive consultations and with respect for each others' views. The process should then culminate in the democratic decision-making at our disposal: a vote in this Assembly. We feel that the time for such a decision has now arrived and that the proposal in document A/59/L.64 contains the elements around which the broadest support of the Member States can be gathered.

For many years, Iceland has advocated a more representative and legitimate Council. The current composition of the Security Council mirrors neither today's geopolitical realities nor the increased membership of the United Nations. We have consistently underlined our view that reform of the Council is urgent and that the need to bring the Council into line with changes that have taken place in the past 60 years is great. We have consistently suggested an increase in permanent and non-permanent seats. In our opinion, for example, Africa must have permanent seats. Iceland actually has repeatedly stated that those changes are long overdue. We concur with the Secretary-General that it would be wise to decide on Security Council reform before the summit in September.

In the informal consultations of the General Assembly this spring, Iceland expressed some concerns that proposed models in earlier documents could make access by smaller States to the Security Council even more difficult, particularly through the reorganization of regional groups. Smaller States make up around half of the United Nations membership and their participation is an important aspect of the legitimacy of the Security Council.

The Icelandic position on the working methods of the Council is well known. The effectiveness of the

Council must not be compromised. The comprehensive reform of the Council must place emphasis on improved working methods, not only composition. Improved working methods, including more transparency, are important for all Member States, and not least the smaller ones.

We believe that the vast majority of Member States can rally around the proposed improvements in the Council's working methods as set out in subparagraphs (a) to (i) of paragraph 8 of document A/59/L.64. Implementation by the Council of that paragraph will enhance its transparency, inclusiveness and legitimacy and thus will add to the understanding of its decisions by all Member States, thereby increasing the Council's effectiveness.

The draft resolution before us today accommodates the views we have held. Iceland is therefore a sponsor of draft resolution A/59/L.64, and urges other countries to support it.

If we grasp this chance for Security Council reform, 60 years after the founding of the United Nations, the Organization will strengthen its role as the global forum for the maintenance of peace and security for the coming —and no doubt challenging — future. Let us not miss this historic opportunity.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): The Group of African States takes note of the draft resolution introduced by Brazil, Germany, India and Japan.

Past and current debates on the reform of the Security Council have clearly shown that there is a widely shared view on several important points. Among them is the fact that the Council should be enlarged and made more representative, in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, so as to reflect the realities of today's world, which has changed radically during the past 60 years. Africa acknowledges the need for the Security Council to reflect present world realities and be more responsive to the aspirations of all Member States, bearing in mind the undeniable fact that in 1945, when the United Nations was being formed, most of Africa was not represented and that, as a result, Africa today remains without permanent representation in the Security Council, which is the primary body of the United Nations on matters of international peace and security.

Conscious of the need to ensure Africa's legitimate right to fair and equitable representation within the overall process of the reform of the United Nations, and recognizing that all regions of the world must, in a spirit of solidarity, endeavour to build a world of peace, security and justice, the heads of State and Government of member States of the African Union, meeting at its fifth summit meeting, held in Libya on 4 and 5 July 2005, decided to reaffirm their strong commitment to the Ezulwini Consensus. They also adopted what is now known as the Sirte Declaration. The African common position as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration very clearly sets out the African Group's position as regards the expansion of the Security Council. It states that Africa's goal is to be fully represented in all decision-making bodies of the United Nations, particularly in the Security Council, which is the principal decision-making body.

African heads of State and Government approved a draft resolution on the reform of the Security Council during the Sirte summit. Among other things, that draft resolves to enlarge the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership and to improve its working methods. It also resolves to accord new permanent members the same prerogatives and privileges as the current permanent members, including the right of the veto. Finally, it resolves to grant Africa two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats in the Security Council, as well as to increase the Council's overall membership from 15 to 26. The African Group will introduce that draft resolution shortly.

The African Union follow-up mechanism on the reform of the United Nations mandated by the Union's Assembly of Heads of State and Government will meet imminently in New York to hold consultations with the relevant stakeholders and other actors of the membership of the United Nations to ensure the attainment of Africa's aspirations as enunciated in the Ezulwini consensus.

Mr. Savua (Fiji): My delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting today.

We would like to start by extending our condolences to the people and Government of the United Kingdom in connection with the death and destruction visited upon them last week, on 7 July. Our

sympathies go out primarily to the families of the dead and wounded, the families of those whose loved ones are still missing and yet to be traced and to the people of the United Kingdom as a whole.

We endorse the introduction by the Permanent Representative of Brazil of draft resolution A/59/L.64, on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, which is before the General Assembly this afternoon.

Fiji is a sponsor of that draft resolution. We have taken some time to study and understand it, and we believe it has embraced everything that we have mentioned in various forums. To reiterate, Fiji believes that the key objectives of the reform of the Security Council — to review its working methods and make its membership broadly representative of the realities of the balance of power in today's world — are reflected in the text of the draft resolution. Furthermore, Fiji supports the recommendation to expand Council membership using model A, which is also the basis for the draft resolution.

Fiji also supports the efforts to move ahead with the reform through a proposal asking Member States to take serious decisions on the progress of the enlargement process. We strongly believe that it is time to undertake firm and decisive commitments and to allow the process to make momentous leaps to ensure that some tangible outcomes are arrived at during the summit to be held in September. For we agree with the Secretary-General when he says that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without the reform of the Security Council. The draft resolution is a document that advances that idea.

Our support for draft resolution A/59/L.64 is also based on our confidence that the outcome will enhance the democratic and accountable nature of the Council and bring into its decision-making process countries more representative of the broader membership, especially from the developing world. It further recognizes the value and degree of their contributions to the United Nations system in general, peace and security, and the significant role they have played in the development of those of us less fortunate than others.

The reform of the Security Council has been discussed continuously for well over a decade and debated substantially in the past few years. To further delay the process would not only stagnate the approval of other important issues, but would also send the wrong message to the world that we who are Members of the United Nations prefer at this moment to wait rather than to seize the day. We ask the General Assembly to favourably consider adopting the draft resolution.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The United Nations plays an indispensable role in international affairs.

China has always supported the further strengthening of the United Nations through reform and is ready to join others in actively cooperating with the President of the General Assembly and the facilitators to strive for positive results in the overall reform of the United Nations and to ensure the success of the September summit.

China supports the necessary and rational reform of the Security Council with a view to enhancing its capacity to respond to global threats and challenges. Our position has been explicit and consistent. We believe, first, that the reform of the Security Council should be multifaceted, including both the enlargement of the membership and the improvement of working methods. At the same time, the Council's authority and efficiency must also be ensured.

Secondly, the enlargement of the Security Council must give priority to increasing the representation and voice of the developing countries. The developing countries constitute over two thirds of the membership of the United Nations, but they are seriously underrepresented on the Security Council. China firmly supports the increase of the representation of African countries on the Council. That position is unswerving.

Thirdly, any enlargement formula must ensure that small and medium-sized countries have more opportunities to serve as members of the Security Council and to participate in its decision-making.

Fourthly, the enlargement of the Security Council must uphold the principle of geographical balance and reflect the representation of different cultures and civilizations. Reform formulas that have implications for particular regions should first achieve consensus within relevant regional groups.

It has been the consistent view of China that the reform of the Security Council should be realized

through a gradual process of democratic discussion aimed at achieving consensus. Through the United Nations Charter, the entire membership of the United Nations solemnly confers on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and authorizes the Council to act on its behalf in fulfilling that responsibility. The reform of the Security Council is extremely sensitive and complex because it is crucial not only to international peace and security, but also to the immediate interests of all States Members of the United Nations. Therefore, a decision on the reform of the Security Council should be made by all Members of the United Nations and be based on the will of the vast majority of the membership. It should not just address the concerns of a few States or a part of the membership. Only decisions achieved through the widest possible consensus can enjoy universal trust and support and serve the common and long-term interests of all the States Members of the United Nations.

At present, after more than half a year's repeated discussions, differences surrounding the enlargement formula of the Security Council seem to be widening rather than narrowing. The group of four, the Uniting for Consensus group, the African Union and the United States all put forward their own draft resolutions or ideas, and we cannot exclude the possible emergence of other new formulas later on. That fully demonstrates the complexity of the question of Security Council enlargement. It is fair to say that we are still far from finding a formula that can accommodate the concerns of all sides or win widespread support.

In such circumstances, Member States need more time to continue dialogue and to carry out full consultations in search of a compromise. Most Member States do not want to be forced to vote on a formula on which there is no broad consensus. Forcing through an immature formula by means of a vote is bound to split Member States and regional groups and thus weaken the authority and role of the United Nations. To do so would also totally defeat the original purpose of Security Council reform.

Based on the aforementioned considerations, China is firmly opposed to setting an artificial time frame for Security Council reform and rejects a forced vote on any formula on which there still exist significant differences.

The entire membership of the United Nations places high hopes in the September summit and looks forward to positive results in the overall reform of the United Nations so that the Organization can maintain its vitality and renew its glory. Security Council reform is an important part of the overall reform of the United Nations. However, reforms in other fields are equally important and the enlargement of the Security Council should not distract from consultations on other important reform proposals. For several months now, the preparation for the summit has been almost hijacked by the debate surrounding the enlargement of the Security Council, which has seriously diluted the attention and input given to such other major issues as development, security, human rights and the reform of the Secretariat. On the question of the enlargement of the Security Council, any hasty action in disregard of the interests of all sides will create serious division among Member States and may result in a final outcome of the September summit that is not up to our expectations. That is undoubtedly a situation none of us would wish to see and that we must try our utmost to avoid.

China is convinced that Member States still have the time and opportunity to achieve a broad consensus on the enlargement of the Security Council. The key lies in the genuine political will and the spirit of compromise of all sides. The unity and consensus of Member States are the most valuable assets of the United Nations. It was on that basis that the United Nations rose from the ravages of the Second World War. Moreover, it is on that basis that we shall respond in the new century to the new security threats and challenges and achieve common development and prosperity. We must not arbitrarily negate the possibility of achieving consensus on the enlargement of the Security Council without having yet made any substantive endeavours. China appeals to and urges all Member States to proceed from the consideration of maintaining the unity and long-term interests of the United Nations and to make every effort to avoid an unfortunate situation in which a showdown on Security Council enlargement is forced upon Member States while conditions are not yet ripe.

Mr. Towpik (Poland): I am taking the floor today as a representative of a country whose authorities and public opinion remain strongly convinced that the reform of the United Nations is both timely and necessary.

As we have already stated on many occasions, the United Nations system must adapt itself to the current international environment in order adequately to respond to the threats and challenges facing us today.

In presenting our idea of the new political act for the United Nations, we underlined the fact that any changes made to the United Nations system should be of both a conceptual and institutional nature. With respect to the first category, we have already made progress by adopting the Millennium Declaration. Further necessary steps in that regard will, it is hoped, be taken during the September summit.

However, as underlined by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "In larger freedom", we do not have to wait for the summit to conclude all institutional reforms. Some of them can and should be undertaken before September. That is especially true with regard to reform of the main organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security, namely the Security Council.

We all agree that what we need is a stronger and more efficient Security Council — a Council which is able to take decisions and has the authority to ensure that they are fully implemented. That is why, in our opinion, reform of the Security Council should mean, inter alia, enlargement in both categories of its membership. By choosing the option of six new permanent seats in the Council, we are following through with our declared support for the aspirations of those countries that make important contributions to the United Nations system.

We believe also that an increased number of permanent members should reflect the broader membership of the United Nations as a whole. That is why we have repeatedly pointed out that Africa and Latin America should have representation in the permanent membership of the Council. Enlargement in the non-permanent category, which should include one additional seat for the Eastern European regional Group — whose membership has doubled over the past 15 years — should ensure an appropriate regional balance in the Council.

Our conviction that it is only through bold decisions, taken at the right time, that we can adapt this Organization to political realities has led us to sponsor the draft resolution submitted at the beginning of this debate by the representative of Brazil. That draft resolution is intended to resolve, in the best possible way, this complex and difficult problem which for more than a decade now has been deliberated within the United Nations. In our opinion, this solution is careful to take into consideration the interests of all the regional groups as well as many different viewpoints. The proposed language concerning the veto power has already found broad acceptance.

Finally, the proposal to hold, after 15 years, a review of the accepted solution would ensure that we would not be creating a kind of permanent solution but that we would be able to envisage possible changes and adaptations in future.

By proceeding with the process of, and deciding on, Security Council enlargement, we will send a clear signal that we will spare no effort in finalizing a comprehensive reform of the whole United Nations system. The adoption of the draft resolution would indeed have some important positive results, first of all symbolic, as it would show that the Member States are truly determined to undertake a real reform of the United Nations system. The adoption of that draft resolution would also have a practical result: a more representative Council would adopt more legitimate, forceful and effectively implemented decisions.

We cannot agree with those who argue that an expansion would slow down the process of decision-making and reduce the efficiency of the Council. In Europe, for more than 10 years, we have witnessed a number of enlargements of institutions and organizations, and those structural changes did not affect their capacity to act. On the contrary, those bodies continue to fulfil their goals and mandates by adapting themselves to new political and economic realities. The effectiveness of intergovernmental institutions does not lie in the number of their members; it lies in the political will of States.

Poland believes that this Organization is not lacking in political will. We believe that Member States will not allow critics of the United Nations to point to this debate as yet another example of simple discussions without any conclusions. The time has come to take a resolute decision reflecting the realities of our times, our needs and our hopes.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened today's debate. For some time now, the Organization has been looking forward to holding a debate such as this.

First of all, it is important for us to underline the fact that the proposal submitted by the group of four is not the only proposal concerning the enlargement of the Security Council. There are other proposals, as we have heard today. One of those proposals, submitted by Uniting for Consensus and supported by Argentina, and which was circulated to all Member States on Friday last, was clearly and comprehensively explained by the representative of Pakistan at today's meeting, which is why I shall not refer to it.

In that context, we cannot deny, however, that we have felt a certain amount of pressure to discuss a draft text which has not met with any consensus, which sidelines major actors in our Organization and which would result in divisions within, and a weakening of, our Organization.

The United Nations was created as a democratic system — as a multilateral parliament and a forum for debate in which all options can be considered on an equal footing. To tell the truth, the negotiation process on reform of the Security Council has not yet been formally finalized, as consensus has not yet been reached. It is true that we have been discussing the issue for a number of years now in various working groups. However, we have as yet been unable to attain the necessary consensus, and that is why it is crucial for us to avoid bringing any pressure to bear and to avoid rushing into a vote that, I repeat, would divide Member States.

The importance of the matter at hand makes it necessary, we believe, for the General Assembly to work together to cooperate in order to achieve effective and legitimate results, given that the decisions of the Security Council, as the Assembly is aware, are binding on the entire international community. Argentina strongly hopes that reform of the Security Council will take place and that discussions on all other reform-related agenda items will be brought to a successful conclusion, so that the lasting results achieved can enhance the work of the Organization, 60 years after its creation.

Since the establishment of the Organization in 1945, Argentina has held the view that there should not be different categories of membership, and we continue to maintain the same position of principle. We know that in 1945 the international community accepted that discrimination for reasons of historical necessity that have nothing to do with today's world. It is unjust to address that unfair situation by adding even more unfairness and increasing inequality. It does not seem correct or reasonable to try to cure an illness by adding to what caused it.

In our opinion, the proposal of the group of four contained in document A/59/L.64 would create discrimination and artificial hegemonies among regions. Obviously, that would not only be harmful to the work of the Security Council, but also jeopardize international peace and security by creating dangerous inequalities in some regions with very sensitive political realities. Moreover, it would give disproportionate weight to some regional groups that already have it, by creating a Security Council with an excessive number of permanent members. That would perpetuate an attitude that runs counter to the legal equality of States and endangers the attainment of the objectives of the Charter.

We are all aware that, in the history of the Organization, the Security Council has failed many times to impose peace. That has been due fundamentally to conflicts among its permanent members. Neither the concept of permanent membership nor the veto has been a useful tool for ensuring international peace and security. How can we think that with six new permanent members the Council will be more effective and responsible in carrying out its functions? We believe that the most effective way to bring that about is to increase the number of non-permanent members, leaving more room for the developing world and for small and medium-sized States.

It would be very dangerous for the future of the United Nations if we were now obliged to vote on a draft resolution that has neither universal acceptance nor the support of all the permanent members. In our view, the idea of mobilizing everyone to vote on an amendment that might not enter into force is also dangerous. We must ask ourselves a question: must we pay the price of lack of progress on reform because of the stubbornness of some States that want to gain prestige by becoming permanent members? Should we not try to reach a fair and reasonable solution through democratic consultation and a cautious and responsible attitude?

In that context, we believe that the proposal of the Uniting for Consensus group avoids those dangers and promotes a flexible, regionally fair and responsible

approach. It is aimed at strengthening the legitimacy of the Security Council, and hence of the United Nations, because it promotes greater openness, democratization, transparency and responsibility on the part of States members of the Council. That would not be achieved with new permanent members, whose joining the Council would prevent greater access for small and medium-sized countries — in particular, I repeat, those of the developing world — in the work of maintaining international peace and security.

We therefore urge the sponsors of document A/59/L.64 not to lead us to a divisive vote that would weaken the Organization even more. We ask all members to support our proposal. We also request you, Mr. President, to continue the consultations so that we can achieve the consensus that the Organization deserves after 60 years.

Mrs. Londoño (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Mr. President, for giving us this additional opportunity to expand the debate on Security Council reform. We believe that an open, broad debate aimed at reaching consensus is the best way to make progress on the reform we are currently discussing. We also believe that we should not set ourselves a time limit for reaching agreement on Security Council reform.

Colombia's position is based on principles and considerations that are well known to everyone and that go back to the time when we discussed the creation of the Organization. Colombia has always expressed its opposition to the veto, and we voted against it in San Francisco, because we believed that it would introduce an anti-democratic element into the decision-making process and that it did not reflect the principle of the sovereign equality of States. We still hold that conviction today; that is why we do not believe it appropriate to extend the veto when considering the expansion of the Security Council. Consequently, we support the necessary expansion of the Council through the inclusion of new members in the non-permanent category.

It is also important to review the Council's working methods to make them more transparent and to ensure better communication with other United Nations Member States. Likewise, accountability must be improved. In that connection, we believe it necessary to promote a more fluid dialogue with the General Assembly, the only universal organ of the Organization.

Those elements — democratization, widening the membership and working methods — are at the heart of our debate. Various groups of countries have prepared documents and draft resolutions that present their own perspectives. They have all enriched the debate on reform and are therefore welcome.

The document on the "cascade effect" (A/59/856, annex), submitted by Costa Rica, calls attention to the representation of the five permanent members throughout the United Nations system. That could mean a situation in which not five, but 11 countries would cause such a cascade effect.

Bearing those objectives in mind, we have worked not only to achieve consensus, but to formulate specific proposals that would make it possible to develop expansion formulas based on the principle of sovereign equality; formulas that unite rather than divide us; formulas that enable us to practice democratic multilateralism with a broad, flexible and comprehensive vision.

The proposal that we have submitted with Uniting for Consensus would permit Security Council expansion and would improve opportunities for all Members of the Organization to serve in the Council. It would provide for simple reform that would allow everyone's interests to be reflected in one way or another.

What is important now is to maintain unity and to think about the United Nations with a long-term vision, seeking its efficiency and effectiveness.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): In two months' time, our heads of State or Government are convening for what might well be the most important United Nations meeting for a long time. We must agree on comprehensive, bold and action-oriented reforms to strengthen the United Nations and adapt it to the world of today.

Last week's despicable attacks in London were the most horrendous reminder of the urgency of finding global solutions to global threats. We need concrete reform decisions, with timetables as appropriate, in all the four areas under discussion: development, security, human rights and institutional reform. If we can achieve that, the September summit will be a success.

Attaining a reformed Security Council is one of the most daunting tasks, and also one of the most important. The composition, size and working methods of the Council need to reflect today's realities in order to be perceived as relevant and legitimate. Therefore, a decision is urgent and should be taken before the summit in September. Non-action is not an option.

Since the Charter was adopted 60 years ago, a number of countries, including in Africa, Asia and Latin America, have emerged as key political and economic Powers. Those countries should be given a role in the work of the Council reflecting their importance and contributions to the United Nations. We welcome the fact that African States are forthcoming in expressing their aspirations.

A reform of the Security Council needs the broadest possible support to be considered legitimate. This debate should help us in our efforts to secure such broad support.

Sweden notes the various draft resolutions presented to us. We sympathize with the aspirations of the group of four to expand their representation on the Council. We have some concerns regarding two aspects of their draft, as we want to see a Security Council that is more legitimate, effective and accountable.

First, we fully support the recommendation of the Secretary-General not to expand the veto power. Our preference is to limit the use of veto and to promote a veto-free culture. Introducing new veto rights, even if circumscribed as in the current group of four draft, would in our view not be a step in the right direction.

Secondly, we welcome a review clause, but would like to see it further strengthened and made periodic. Such review could take into account criteria relevant to the obligations of Council members to contribute to international peace and security. Fulfilling those criteria would add legitimacy for continued permanent status. Thus, we would prefer to see an explicit mechanism that would make it possible for other Member States to review the performance of the new permanent members and, with the support of a two-thirds majority, replace them if they fail in their responsibilities. It should not be easy to replace a new permanent member, but it should be possible without going through the full procedure of changing the Charter.

A reform of the Security Council with the broadest possible support among Member States is necessary. We should have a Council that is representative, legitimate and accountable.

Mr. Sareva (Finland): The major event this September will provide us with a unique opportunity to take decisive steps towards implementing the Millennium Declaration and meeting the Millennium Development Goals, while at the same time ensuring a safer and more secure world. It is of the utmost importance that all countries assume the responsibility to implement the commitments made at the Millennium summit.

The coming summit will also present us with an historic opportunity to modernize and adapt the United Nations to the challenges of the new century. The momentum for institutional reform that now exists must not be lost. While we stress the importance of the revitalization of the General Assembly and the need to re-establish its political stature, and call for a stronger role for the Economic and Social Council, we also support the reform and enlargement of the Security Council.

In Finland's view, any reform of the Council must aim at increasing both its legitimacy and its effectiveness. A Council that is truly effective in carrying out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security should also be seen as more legitimate by the wider membership of the Organization. At the same time, a more representative and thereby more legitimate Council will, over the longer run, be more effective in carrying out its functions.

Finland therefore supports an enlargement of the Council in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members. However, for the Council to be both effective and legitimate, the right of veto should not be extended to the new permanent members under any circumstance. Finland also strongly supports reform of the Council's working methods so as to make them more transparent, inclusive and legitimate.

Finland agrees with the Secretary-General's view that we should agree to take a decision on that important issue before the summit in September. We also agree that, even if it would be preferable for action to be taken by consensus, that must not become an excuse for postponing action.

To conclude, Finland supports the draft resolution contained in document A/59/L.64 and will vote in favour of it when it comes up for a vote. Furthermore, I should add that we have previously and on a number of occasions expressed our support for the aspirations of Japan and Germany to be elected permanent members of an enlarged Council.

Mr. Filippi Balestra (San Marino): With reference to the dramatic and barbaric terrorist act perpetrated in London, I would like, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of San Marino, to reiterate our strong condemnation of any act of terrorism and to express our sentiments of deepest condolence to the Government of the United Kingdom and the families of the victims.

I wish to thank you, Sir, for organizing this meeting to discuss the draft resolution introduced by the group of four and all other proposals relating to the enlargement of the Security Council. I will try to be very pragmatic and underline just a few points, because everything — and even too much — has already been said on that issue.

San Marino deems that a vote at a difficult and delicate time for the United Nations would be extremely divisive, create fractures among countries, lower credibility and, above all, weaken the Organization.

Draft resolution A/59/L.64, besides presenting essential factors that the Government of San Marino does not agree with, opens the way to several cascade effects that none of us is able to estimate and that could limit the participation of small and medium-sized countries in several organs of the United Nations.

Moreover, it entails some procedural problems. For example, according to the draft resolution, the General Assembly shall proceed no later than 12 weeks after its approval to a vote to elect the new permanent members of the Security Council. Since the draft resolution is a recommendation to Member States and becomes effective only after ratification by two thirds of the membership, the enlarged Security Council would not exist yet. How can we designate and elect new members of an organ that does not yet exist? Legal principles and common sense require us to proceed to a vote only after the effective establishment of the enlarged Council.

The group of four has failed to give the international community the evidence that the Security Council, as they foresee it, will be as or more efficient. Experience teaches us that a number increase decreases efficiency. In fact, how can we imagine a more efficient Council with more than double the number of countries that can exercise the right of veto? The Security Council cannot afford to give up its efficiency and efficacy, because it is the only United Nations organ that must act urgently and immediately and that was created for that purpose.

In addition, the draft resolution of the group of four does not focus enough on improving the methods of work of the Security Council, which we believe represents one of the priorities of the reform. In this regard, I would like to express support for the paper presented by Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

San Marino, however, agrees with the principle contained in the proposal circulated by the Uniting for Consensus group. We believe that that proposal shows a much more flexible approach. The General Assembly would maintain the right to elect the non-permanent members. The draft resolution would ensure the frequent rotation of small and medium-sized countries. It would enhance accountability, increase the representation of developing countries and allow countries to be re-elected and therefore to make their presence felt more strongly in this Organization.

The world expects to see our Organization united, efficient and productive, because the challenges of our time require that. We therefore believe that it is more proper to take the time to reach the broadest possible agreement, instead of pushing a draft resolution that would surely convey an image of a divided Organization run in the interests of a small elite.

Mr. Šerkšnys (Lithuania): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting of the General Assembly.

A lot has been said about the reform of the Security Council since the release of the report of the High-level Panel last December. Indeed, a lot has been said over the past 10 years or so, the Razali paper being just one case in point. In other words, we have had more than ample time to talk. The time has now come to move from words to deeds, even if the desired consensus is missing.

It is time to act, because failing to act now will only perpetuate the status quo, denying hopes for more equitable representation for a large part of the world, especially the developing world. Failing to act now will leave us fatigued by an oft-promised but not implemented reform. We do not want such fatigue to spread to other areas of the United Nations reform process, depriving us of impetus, of instruments and of the means necessary to adequately respond to new global concerns and challenges, and disappointing millions of people throughout the world, for many of whom the United Nations continues to be the main hope for a semblance of human existence. Let us complete this first step in the overall reform process and focus on what we can achieve at the September summit.

Lithuania has chosen to co-sponsor the draft resolution of the group of four with a view to making the Security Council more transparent and democratic in its working methods and more representative in terms of present and future global realities.

We are not saying that the draft is perfect. But for us, it is the only viable draft on the table, one enabling the composition of the Security Council to reflect the actual growth in the United Nations membership over the years and giving the Council added legitimacy by increasing the number of both permanent and non-permanent members.

In fact, the draft offers improvements to all regions, including the regional group comprising the nations of Central and Eastern Europe, which has seen its membership almost double over the past decade or so and which has witnessed some of the most dramatic and impressive political and economic transformations in recent years.

Most importantly, the draft offers a decent chance to improve the representation of developing countries on the Security Council, including by adding new permanent seats. We believe that the developing world of Africa, Asia and Latin America should be eligible for permanent seats. We do not quite see how perpetuating a reality dating back to 1945 by keeping the number of permanent seats unchanged can improve the Council's ability to respond more effectively to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Permanent membership is a privilege. But, first and foremost, it confers a great responsibility to contribute significantly and systematically to international peace and security. We have therefore consistently welcomed the proposals to give an opportunity to countries that have the resources, the capacity and the will to make a particularly meaningful contribution to the work of the Security Council to participate in its decision-making on a continuous and permanent basis.

Notably, by introducing a review clause, the draft resolution provides for the real possibility of further adjusting and adapting the Security Council to constantly changing international realities, making sure that the new permanent members make good on their word. The review clause would enable us all, collectively, to weigh the actions and contributions of Council members objectively and honestly against our collective expectations for better security and for peace and to address their delivery with regard to these expectations.

Ideally, we would like to see the widest possible agreement on Security Council reform, including the expansion of its membership. But we live in the real world. Let us therefore be realistic and not make the absence of consensus an excuse for inaction.

We could go on arguing about the issue for many years to come, denying the right of Security Council membership to regions that have the most to gain or to lose from the results of the Council's work. But it is not just the developing world of Africa, Asia and Latin America that will lose if we fail to adjust the Council to counter the multiple challenges ahead of us. It will be a loss for us all, because, as we have repeated multiple times in this Assembly Hall, there is no development without security, and no security without development. Because of that inextricable linkage, we will all win or all lose.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to join other speakers in thanking you, Mr. President, for having provided this opportunity to discuss the reform of the Security Council today.

My country has had the opportunity, on a number of occasions during informal discussions in the course of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, to state its position on the issue of Security Council reform. That position is summarized in the text that has been distributed.

Today we have before us a draft resolution that proposes a model and a specific methodology for

Council reform. It is the result of many months of work by its authors to make the proposal known and to take into account the suggestions and views of Member States.

While acknowledging those efforts, Switzerland considers that three important questions should be dealt with more clearly.

First, Switzerland is opposed to granting the right of veto to new permanent members. We joined the United Nations two and a half years ago, following a referendum of the Swiss people that sent a clear and undisputed message from all of the political forces that our people distrusted and were opposed to all privileges, in particular the right of veto. In adapting the Security Council to the new international realities, we must avoid strengthening its anachronistic aspects. The draft resolution introduces welcome restrictions, but it still contains ambiguities, which should be removed.

Secondly, with regard to the review clause in paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, Switzerland supports the proposal that has just been put forward by the representative of Sweden aimed at facilitating a genuine periodic review of the composition of the Security Council by Member States.

The decision to add new permanent members to the Security Council would be easier if the Member States had the ability to periodically express their views on its composition. If necessary, by means of a vote representing a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly, they should have the possibility to replace newly elected permanent members whose contribution to the achievement of the Organization's objectives were no longer seen to be in keeping with the expectations of the large majority of Member States. That adjustment, which may appear to be somewhat theoretical, is important to the extent that it tones down the idea of permanency, a notion that causes considerable problems for a significant number of States.

We note with interest the explanations made by the Permanent Representative of Brazil at the opening of this meeting to the effect that the review should take into consideration the effectiveness and composition of the Council. We hope that this will be reflected in the text of the draft resolution.

As far as the working methods of the Security Council are concerned, all Member States have had the opportunity to examine the proposals that Switzerland submitted in a document distributed to all missions on 27 April 2005. The draft resolution before us today partly takes into consideration the recommendations that Switzerland feels particularly strongly about. However, it does not address three concerns that we also consider to be of particular importance.

First, it should no longer be possible for the current permanent members to exercise their right of veto when the Council is called upon to act on cases of genocide, large-scale massacres, ethnic cleansing, or other grave breaches of international humanitarian law. That proposal, which was warmly received during our informal debates since January, should have no trouble being accepted and finding a consensus.

Secondly, the Security Council should abstain in every possible way from exercising a legislative role. It should define the urgent and exceptional situations in which it can be compelled to do so, and ensure that in such cases the points of view of all Member States are heard and taken into consideration in the decision-making process.

Thirdly, when sanctions regimes adopted by the Security Council include lists of individuals or entities, the sanctions committees should establish precise procedures to allow for reviews to be conducted regarding those individuals or entities which claim to be placed or kept wrongly on such lists. As the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change has emphasized, it is necessary to ensure compliance with human rights norms and conventions. Switzerland suggests including those proposals in paragraph 8 of the text because it is convinced that they will increase the number of countries that could support the draft resolution and would at least partially respond to the call on the Assembly made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Jordan for further specifics on the Council's working methods.

The reform of the Security Council is necessary and a decision on that subject is a serious and important measure. The General Assembly must act, and it can do so with determination. An additional effort is nevertheless needed to ensure that the actual reform of the Security Council fully contributes to the collective action that we are taking together to improve the Organization within the current reform process. For

many months, the reform of the Security Council has been discussed on the basis of principles, criteria and positions whose validity is largely recognized: equality of States, the principle of differentiated responsibility depending on the capacity to act, the balance of power through the acknowledgement of new Powers, as well as stability, continuity and flexibility. Beyond those principles, it is necessary to find ways and means to allow for compromise on concrete issues, including the notion of permanency, the right of veto and the working methods, in order to enlarge the group of countries that can support the proposed enlargement with conviction.

Mr. Sopoaga (Tuvalu): Tuvalu is honoured to speak and contribute to the debate on agenda item 53 of the General Assembly. My delegation wishes to thank you, Sir, for convening this very important debate.

The question before this debate, in our view, is not so much about how, but about when this body, the General Assembly, can take up decisions that are urgently needed to make the United Nations more reflective of the realities of the twenty-first century, more capable of addressing those challenges, and more legitimate and meaningful to all regions and countries, including the smallest and most isolated.

Tuvalu believes that the time is ripe for us to decide on a more equitable and representative Security Council. We believe that the rationale, justification and modalities for the expansion of the Security Council have all been well reflected and consulted upon by all Members since their introduction in the Secretary-General's report and other relevant United Nations reports. In our view, unless the question is resolved now, it will become the fork in the road in our ongoing efforts to achieve more comprehensive reforms in the United Nations, particularly to enhance development, security and human rights for all.

Tuvalu supports and has agreed to co-sponsor draft resolution A/59/L.64, introduced by the Permanent Representative of Brazil, in the conviction that it is fair and balanced and advances what are basically the recommendations of relevant United Nations reports and the views expressed during extensive debates, dialogues and consultations. More importantly, it also provides for a more representative Council that is effective in discharging its primary responsibility for addressing the security concerns of all countries, and particularly those of smaller States.

For instance, and as the Secretary-General's report "In larger freedom" reminds us in a timely manner, our security in Tuvalu also relates to and is already threatened by the adverse impacts of environmental degradation, in particular of climate change and sea-level rise. As asserted by the Secretary-General, without action, small island developing States like Tuvalu will pay a bitter price for the actions of others.

We believe that the draft resolution before us will allow for a framework not only for an expanded Security Council, but also for one that will be more responsive and responsible to the security concerns of all nations — a Council that will also take account of and include environmental security on its agenda.

Again, Tuvalu wishes to express its strong support for the draft resolution contained in document A/59/L.64 and appeals to other United Nations Members to support it.

Mrs. Silkalna (Latvia): Thank you, Sir, for convening this timely debate. Allow me to add some brief remarks in support of the draft resolution before us.

Latvia is a sponsor of the draft resolution in the belief that it opens the way to a workable and balanced model for Security Council reform. We strongly support the creation of new permanent seats. The Council needs to be better equipped with diplomatic, financial and, if necessary, military means to address the evolving security challenges that we all face. We believe that the continuity and stability provided by permanent seats can only enhance the overall effectiveness of the Security Council.

Latvia notes that the draft resolution offers greater opportunities for all the regional groups to share in the work of the Security Council. We particularly welcome the creation of an additional non-permanent seat for the group of Eastern European States, which has grown considerably in recent years. As a region where numerous States have recently achieved peaceful transition from totalitarian rule to democracy, we can make a constructive contribution to the work of the Security Council.

We also welcome the inclusion of a review process in the draft resolution and the shelving of the

question of the veto. As to concerns that a Security Council of 25 would be too large, we consider that the proposed size better reflects the current size of the United Nations membership. A Security Council of 25 members need not be less efficient than the current one, provided that the working methods of the Council are revised. On that point, we support the efforts led by Switzerland.

The General Assembly has spent many years pondering reform of the Security Council without achieving consensus. We must use the current momentum to make progress on a workable model. Adoption of the draft resolution now will also allow us to redirect our full attention to the many other important and pressing issues on the United Nations reform agenda.

Let us make use of this rare window of opportunity. Let us move ahead and adapt the Security Council to better meet the realities faced by our generation.

Mr. Penjo (Bhutan): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this important meeting.

Bhutan has co-sponsored draft resolution A/59/L.64, as we believe that it presents the General Assembly with concrete proposals to reform the Security Council. It is now time for the General Assembly to take decisive action in that regard. My delegation is convinced that the proposals contained in the draft resolution meet the desire of the membership to make the Security Council more effective and reflective of the current world situation.

It proposes to enlarge the Council's membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories so that it is large enough — but not too unwieldy — to be representative of the 191 Member nations. It seeks to achieve a fair and equitable balance in the permanent category by increasing the Council's numbers, making it possible for countries from all regions and of all different development levels to be represented therein. It also seeks to expand the non-permanent seats so that all countries, big and small, have a greater opportunity to serve on the Council. Moreover, it proposes a clear time frame to review the effectiveness of the reformed Council, including the issue of exercise of the veto by the new permanent members. Above all, the proposals on the working methods of the Council are the most comprehensive so far and provide scope for small countries like mine to be more closely involved in the work of the Security Council.

The past few months have witnessed a new momentum in our discussions on Security Council reform. The draft resolution before us is the product of intensive and broad consultations over the past months. It provides the most timely opportunity to bring to fruition our discussions over a decade to achieve a more representative, transparent and effective Security Council.

In September, our leaders will gather at the United Nations to provide a new direction to the Organization and the multilateral system. The proposals in document A/59/L.64 will contribute to that new direction and to the success of the September summit. My delegation is hopeful that all Member States will seize this momentous opportunity and support the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.